“Like a Thief in the Night” – How to Be Ready, When Jesus Comes

 John 14:1-6 & 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

JOKE: The story is told, of a generation ago, . . . when an old farmer, brought his family, to the big city, for the very first time. They had never seen, buildings so tall, or sights so impressive. The farmer dropped his wife off, at a department store, and took his son with him, to the bank, . . . the tallest, of all the buildings. As they walked into the lobby, they saw something else, they had never seen before. Two steel doors opened. A “not so pretty”, and elderly, heavy set, woman walked in, . . . and, the big doors, closed, . . . behind her. The dial over the door, swept to the right, and then, back to the left. The doors opened, and a beautiful young lady, came walking out. The farmer, . . . was amazed. He turned, to his boy, and said, . . . "Son, go get your momma. I'm gonna, . . . run her, through that thing."

(At the Rapture, we will be taken up. And, we will be transformed, . . . and, we will have, . . resurrected bodies.)

\*\* Have you, ever been spooked, before? Have you, ever had something happen, . . . that literally, took you by surprise, and scared the living daylights, out of you? Something, that snuck up on you, and took you by, complete surprise? (If you are like me, this has happened, several times, in your life.) One, stands out:

MISSING BABY DRILL: In the hospital, with Levi, just a couple of weeks old. “My baby, my baby, someone took my baby!” Nurses running, up and down the halls, . . . calling for a lock down, over the intercom.

Sometimes, things in life, . . . catch us by, complete surprise. Some things, happen, in a split second, . . with no warning, whatsoever. This, . . . is the way, that it will be, . . **when Jesus, comes** again, . . to rapture, the church.

Yes, Jesus is coming again, . . . one day. He has promised us, in the Word of God, that He, will come again, . . . and, **that**, . . . we can count on, . . . for sure. God, has never, made a promise, . . . that, He did not keep.

We don’t have to be surprised, that Jesus, **is** coming again, one day, . . .but, . . **when** He comes, will surprise us. When He comes, will surprise us, . . because, He will come, as “**a thief in the night**.” With no warning, He will come, when we least, expect it. What we, must do, . . . is be prepared, . . . we must, . . be ready.

The Bible is very clear, that no one knows, the day, or the time, . . . not even, the Son. Only the Father, knows when that time, will come. It has already, been determined, long ago, before the creation of the world. Today, Jesus is sitting, at the right side, of the Father, . . . anxiously awaiting, the word, to “go get my children.”

\*\*\* Why, is Jesus, coming again, one day? To rapture, the church, . . . to rapture those of us, who have trusted in Him, . . . as our, personal Savior, . . . and, to take us, to Heaven, . . . to spend eternity, . . . with Him.

If we are saved, if we have asked, for the forgiveness of our sins, and we believe in Jesus, and His death, burial, and resurrection, . . . then we, will one day, go to live, for all of eternity, in Heaven. That, is where we will go, when we die, unless, the rapture takes place, before we die. And, if raptured, that is where, we will go.

**But**, . . . if we are not saved, . . . then we will go, to a terrible place, of eternal torment, called **hell**, after we die. Those of us, who have never, trusted in Jesus Christ, those who do not, believe in Him, cannot, and will not, go to Heaven. If the rapture, takes place, and, we are not saved, . . . then, we will be, . . **left behind**.

\* How do we know, for sure, if we are saved? Well, . . we just know. The Holy Spirit, has taken up His abode, within us, . . . and, we just know. (If we have asked Jesus, to save us, . . . then, we will know.) He’s right here!

Also, we will have the **desire**, to live our lives, for Jesus, and be involved, in the church, because, we love Him, so. The Bible says, if we love Him, then we will obey, His commands. (If saved, we will be, different.)

Part, of His commands, is to worship Him, within the confines, of the local church. He is our Heavenly Father, and, if we love Him, . . . then, we will want to, go to His house, . . . which is, the church. We will want to hang out, with other believers, because we have this common bond, of knowing Jesus, and belonging to Him.

Personal Testimony: Christian home, in church, every time the doors were open, . . . parent’s led me, to Jesus.

Saved, just before 7, 11-14, called to preach at 14. Wandered away, from God, at 15, . . . for a long, long time.

\*\* Let’s look, at a couple of passages of scripture, that shows us, **this promise**, . . . that, Jesus, is coming again:

John 14:1-6 – “Do not let your hearts, be troubled. Trust in God; trust also, in me. 2 In my Father's house, are many *mansions*; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there, to prepare a place for you. 3 And, if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come back, and take you to be with me, that you also, may be where I am. 4 You know the way, to the place where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we don't know, where you are going, so how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus answered, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one, comes to the Father, except through me.”

Jesus has promised us, . . . those of us, that have been saved, and belong to Him, that He has gone, to prepare a place, for us. And, it is a wonderful place, called Heaven, . . . where there will be, no more tears, and no more pain, and no more death. (Heaven, will be worship, 24/7. So, . . . I hope, that you like, church.)

And, He has promised, to return, one day, to take us, to be there, with Him. He loves us, so much, that, He laid down His life, for us, by dying on the cross, to take away, our sins. And, He wants us, to spend eternity with Him, in Heaven. He has promised, to come again, to take us, to be with Him, . . . for all of eternity.

And, contrary, to what you may hear, today, . . . there is **only, one way**, . . . to be prepared, . . . for this journey. You can’t be good enough, in your own strength, . . to get to Heaven. You can’t believe in, and worship other Gods, . . . or, other religions, . . . or, your own ideas, and, then go to Heaven. Jesus, . . . is the only way.

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one, comes to the Father, . . . except, through me.”

If you are here today, and you have never, trusted in Jesus Christ, as your personal Savior, then you can do that today, if you would like. He, is the only way. There is, no other way, to get to Heaven. There is, no other way, to be prepared, when He comes, again, . . which, who knows, could be today? You must, . . know Jesus.

Do you, know Him, today? Do you, know Him, for sure? I am convinced, that there are a lot of people, in this world, who claim to know Him, and even think, that they know Him, . . . but, their lives, do not show it.

\*\* If we, are truly saved, then we should, **at least, have the desire**, to spend time, with the Lord, . . . at church, and, at home. How much time, . . . do you spend, . . . with Jesus? The Bible says, . . . that, saved people, . . will produce fruit. Are you, producing fruit? Do you know, this Jesus, . . . that is, coming again? (Peace?)

\*\* We don’t know, when He is coming, we just know, that He is coming, . . . and, it could be soon, it could be any time. Are you, ready? Have you, made your peace, . . with God? He died, upon the cross, to pay for your sins, but, you have to acknowledge, that you have sinned, . . . and, ask Him, to forgive you, of your sins.

The Bible says, that “all have sinned, and fall short, of the glory of God.” “The wages of sin, is death, . . . but, the gift of God, is eternal life, . . . in Christ Jesus.” You must, be saved, in order, to go to Heaven. You must, be ready. Are you ready, if Jesus, was to come back, today? Please, . . . trust, in Him, . . . today.

If you are not, yet saved, then please, do not put it off, any longer. He’s coming again, one day, and it may be, . . . . too late. And, when He comes, it will be, too late. There’s no, second chances, . . . we must be ready, now.

Maybe, you are confused, and you think, that you are saved, but **not sure**. Then, let’s talk after the service, and make sure. Or, you can respond, during the invitation. There’s nothing, to be ashamed of, or, be embarrassed. You need, to make sure. This is the most important decision, . . that, you will ever make, in your entire lifetime.

You are not, sitting here today, by accident. I’m convinced, that God arranged it, so that you would be here, . . . and, be challenged, to trust in Him, as your personal Savior. (It could be, your last warning, . . . I don’t know.)

I pray, that everyone, here today, . . . is saved. But, maybe not. And, we all have loved ones, and friends, that are not saved. If so, let’s try to get them, to come to our revival, . . . that will take place, these next four Sunday mornings. The gospel, will be presented, and, we are praying, that many will come, and be saved. (1 Thess. 5.)

Jesus is coming again, one day, . . . and, we don’t know, when. We can’t put off, our salvation, . . . until the last minute, because, we never know, when Jesus, is coming again, . . . or, when this life, . . . may be over. We just, don’t know, when. It could be, any time. It could be, today. We have, . . . no promise, . . of tomorrow.

\*\* I have been to funerals, just in the few years, of children, and teenagers, and young adults, . . . even 3, in the same family, of 6. A little girl that was 9, and her brother who was 15, who were tragically killed, in an automobile accident. And then, less than a year later, their father, who was only 40 years old, . . . a good friend of mine, . . . killed on a motorcycle, . . . that, he had just purchased, 4 days before.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 – Now, brothers, about times and dates, we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well, that the day of the Lord, will come **like a thief, in the night**. 3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But, you, brothers, are not in darkness, so that this day should surprise you, like a thief. 5 You are all, sons of the light, and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night, or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

The day of the Lord, will come, **like a thief**, in the night. We will have, . . . no warning. We must be ready, now, and always. (If someone, is a thief, and he is going, to steal from you, . . . he will not notify you, of when He is coming. He is going, to sneak up on you, when you least, expect it.) We must, . . . be ready. (Iraq war.)

\*\* The way, things are headed, and the way things are going, in the world, today, . . . I believe, that the time, is very near. (We don’t, know that, for sure, no one does, . . . but everything, going on around us, today, is leading up, to that time, when the eastern skies will split, and Jesus shall appear, to take us home, . . . with Him.)

Listen to these words, of how Jesus will return one day, in the same way, that He ascended into Heaven, . . after His resurrection: Acts 1:8-11 – “But, you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 After He said this, He was taken up, before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him, from their sight. 10 They were looking intently, up into the sky, as He was going, when suddenly two men, dressed in white, stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here, looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you, into heaven, will come back, **in the same way**, you have seen Him go, into heaven.”

This is real, folks. He will come again, one day, . . . maybe, tomorrow, . . . maybe, today, . . . maybe, before I finish, . . . this sermon. And, He will come, in this same way, that He left. And, He will come, . . . when we least, expect it. Are you, . . . ready?

For those of us, who are ready, it will be, a glorious day. For those, who are not ready, . . . for those who do not know Jesus, it will **not**, . . be a good day, . . because they, will be, left behind. Nobody, wants to be, left behind.

\*\* The world, in which we live today, is full of turmoil, and wars, and rumors of wars, and destruction, and sin. And, it seems, as if mankind, is turning to everything, . . . except God. Instead, of things getting better, things are getting much worse, by the minute. (Are you, . . turning to, other things, . . other than, God?)

We need to be about, telling people, about Jesus, because time, is running out. We must realize, “the urgency of the hour”. We need to be, more concerned, . . . about, the eternal destiny, of others. (Invite, next week.)

We may be saved, . . but what about our families, and our neighbors, and the people, that we work with, and the people, that we run into, . . . and, talk with, everyday? We must get busy, telling others, about Jesus, . . . before, it is too late. (**My biggest regret**, . . . not telling, my friends, . . . when, I was partying.)

When Jesus, ascended up into the clouds, and when He promised, to come again, one day, . . . He promised us, the Holy Spirit, would give us the power, to be His witnesses, in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, . . . and Union City, and Fairburn, and Atlanta, . . and, unto the very, ends of the earth. We must, tell others.

Time, is running short. Throughout scripture, throughout the Word of God, we see prophecies, fulfilled. And, throughout scripture, we see, that the signs, that we see today, . . are showing us, that the end, . . is near. Times are getting rougher, and tougher, . . . and, the world, is just getting, worse and worse.

\*\* This world, is going to see, a terrible time period, . . . after the rapture, called **the tribulation**. This is what, people will face, if they are caught, unsaved, and are not ready, when Jesus comes, to rapture the church. He will take, those of us, . . . who are saved, on to Heaven, . . and, then, His wrath, will begin, to unfold.

For seven years, after we are raptured, and in Heaven, with the Lord, . . . this world will see turmoil, like never before, . . . like we cannot, even imagine. The Antichrist, will come onto the scene, . . . deceiving people, and, all kinds of chaos, and destruction, will occur. (The seven continents, . . will not even, be recognizable.)

But, if we are saved, then we will not, be here. Our citizenship is in Heaven, because we have, been redeemed. (Some people believe, that we will still be here, during the tribulation period, . . but, the Bible says, that we will not. Those of us, who are saved, will have already been raptured, and, we will be in Heaven, with our Savior.)

\*\*\* “Folks, . . . we have got to, take it more seriously, this thing, of letting people die, without knowing Jesus”. Jesus is coming again, one day, and it may be soon, . . . it may be, very soon. And, I hope, and pray, . . . that, we are all, ready. (Are you, . . . ready? Are those, closest to you, . . . ready?)

But, I also hope, that we won’t leave, too many people, behind. Wish, we wouldn’t leave anyone, behind. The Bible says, that God hopes, that all, . . will believe, . . . that, He doesn’t want any, to perish. But, unfortunately, there are many, who do not know Jesus, . . . and, they will be left behind, when He, raptures the church.

\*\*\*\*\*\* Have you ever, thought about, what it would be like, . . . to be lost? What would it, be like? Well, we just wouldn’t, know any better. (The Bible says, in 1 Corinthians 2:14, that “the gospel is foolishness, to those, who do not believe.”) Lost people, . . . just, don’t know, any better.

Instead, they fall for, all kinds of lies, . . . and, false beliefs, and myths. They may be deceived, into some false religion or cult, . . . or, they may claim, to not even, believe in God. They may think, . . . that, we kind of just exist, here on earth, . . . with no higher power.

They, are wrong! There is a God, . . . who created us, and who loved us, enough, . . . that, He sacrificed, His own Son, on the cross, to save us, from our sins. Or, we may just be, . . . putting it off.

\*\* Where did we, . . . come from? Lost people, are so confused, . . . and, don’t know, . . . what, to believe.

BIG BANG: Some people believe, that once, there was two black clouds, of mass, that bumped into each other, and, although, there were no gases, they somehow caused, . . . some type, of explosion. And, that was how, this world, got started. And, then an atom, . . . that, we don’t know, where it came from, . . . this atom, split.

And then, somehow, water came from nowhere, and in this water, these little tadpoles, formed . . out of nothing. And, then, for some strange reason, this atom split, and even though we had no brain whatsoever, we decided to grow arms and legs, and eventually, over millions of years, . . . we became man. (Now, ain’t that, . . . stupid?)

I heard this story, . . . a few years ago, and the guy that said, his biology teacher, tried to pass this junk off, on them, accused him of being a Christian, because he questioned her theory. And, he was lost, at the time.

\*\* God, must have been, working on Him. You know, . . God has a way, of calling us, . . unto Himself, . . and, drawing us, to Him, . . . by the Holy Spirit. If you are here, this morning, . . and, you are not, 100% sure, . . that you are saved, . . . then, He may be calling you, . . . this morning. Has He been, . . . working on you, . . . lately?

\*\*\*\*\*\* What about, those of you here, today, that maybe you are saved, . . . but, you sometime, over the years,

 . . . you have wandered away, from God. You don’t go to church anymore, . . . you are too busy, doing your own thing. But, you know, that you belong, to God, . . . and, He wants you, . . to come back home.

Are you tired, of messing up your life, and being miserable? Don’t you want to, . . . come home, to Jesus, this morning? I don’t care, how bad things have gotten, . . . I don’t care what you’ve done, . . . Jesus is there, with wide open arms, . . . waiting to hold you, in His arms, once again. (My Story!) (Open Sin!) (Eerie feeling!)

\*\*\* God is, most likely, speaking to your heart, this morning. You are not here, by accident. God is in control, and, He wanted you here, today, to hear this message, . . . so, that, He could, speak to you. Is He trying, to get your attention, this morning? Are you, listening? Are you, . . . not saved? Are you, backslidden?

I FEEL THE TUG: There’s a song, about a little boy, flying a kite. And, the kite just keeps, going higher, and higher, until it is completely, out of sight, hidden in the clouds. A little girl, comes along, and ask, what he was doing. He says, flying a kite. She says, I can’t see it, how do you know, it is there? **I feel, . . . the tug!**

That’s, how it is, when God, is calling us, to Him. The Holy Spirit, . . . tugs, at our hearts. And, we know, He is there, . . . because, . . . **we feel, the tug**. Is He tugging, at your heart, . . . today? He wants you, . . . to trust in Him, . . . and, be saved, today. Do you feel, . . . the tug? **He wants you, . . . to come home.**

As Christians, we know what, this tugging, at our hearts, feels like. God continuously, speaks to our hearts, in this way, after we are saved. Is He, speaking to you, . . . this morning? Is He, tugging at your hearts, in regard, to something? (I felt, this tugging at my heart, 20 years ago. Praise God, . . . He called, . . . me home!)

If God, is tugging, at your heart, for any reason, today, . . . then come, this morning, and kneel, in this altar, . . . (or, just sit, on the front row), . . . and, cry out to God. He will hear your cry, and He will save you, . . or, if you are saved, but have walked away from Him, . . He is waiting, with open arms, to receive you, back into His fold.

**Jesus is coming again**, one day, and it could be, . . . today. Are you ready? Are you ready, . . . if Jesus comes, today? Proverbs 25:25 – “Like cold water, to a weary soul, . . . is good news, from a distant land.”

Closing: Wedding story!

**After Invitataion:** If God is speaking to your heart, in any way, this morning, . . . please, please promise me, . . or, better yet, . . . promise God, that you will be here, next week. I’ve got a story, that I want to share, with you.

“Like a Thief in the Night” – How to Be Ready, When Jesus Comes

We don’t have to be surprised that Jesus \_\_\_\_ coming again one day, but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ He comes will surprise us.

If the rapture takes place and we are not saved, then we will be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

John 14:1-6 – “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many *mansions*; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.”

There is only \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ to be prepared for this journey. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the only way.

If we are truly saved, then we should at least \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to spend time with the Lord

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23 – “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.”

Maybe, you are confused and you just think that you are saved, but \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 – Now, brothers, about times and dates, we do not need to write to you for you know very well, that the day of the Lord will come **like a thief in the night**. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman and they will not escape. But, you brothers are not in darkness, so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

The day of the Lord will come \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the night. We must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 1:8-11 – “But, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back **in the same way** you have seen Him go into heaven.”

“Folks, we have got to take it more seriously, this thing of letting people die without knowing Jesus”.

1 Corinthians 2:14 – “. . . that the gospel is foolishness to those who do not believe.”

Do you feel the tug? He wants you, . . . to come home.

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